

Key terms in Mahayana Buddhism and Shin Buddhism

Conventional truth	Highest truth
Form	Emptiness
Distinctions	No distinctions
Words	Beyond words

blind passion	boundless compassion
foolish being	Amida Buddha
Namu	Amida Butsu
defiled world	Pure Land
samsara	nirvana
self-power	other-power

Shinran (1173-1262), contemporary of Dogen (1200-1253)

Founding figure of Shin Buddhism, which is a form of Pure Land Buddhism, and the largest sect of Japanese Buddhism.

Dogen: Celibate path of a monk living in a monastery, Eiheiiji

Shinran: Lay path of a married man who taught along with his partner, Eshinni, among peasants and fishermen in the countryside.

Dogen: Focus on seated meditation in monastic practice

Shinran: Focus on chanting the Name of Amida among lay people

Foolish Being and Boundless Compassion

The Saying of the Name (Nembutsu):

Namu Amida Butsu, from the Sanskrit, Namō Amitābha Buddha

Namo is from Namas, as in "Namaste"

"Amitābha" is the Buddha of Infinite Light. However, the Buddha is a dynamic activity. Thus, Namu Amida Butsu, or Namō Amitābha Buddha, means:

"I entrust myself to the awakening of infinite light"

"True entrusting" (Jpn. *Shinjin*) is very close to enlightenment

Nirvana	Parinirvana (final nirvana of the Buddha Sakyamuni)
True Entrusting	Birth (realization) of the Pure Land